

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director for Operations
Office of General Counsel

FROM: John F. Blake
Deputy Director for Administration

SUBJECT: Retention of Classification of
Unevaluated Intelligence Reports

1. Action Requested: Approval of declassification policy described herein and signature of letter to the Archivist.

2. Background:


a. The National Archives and Records Service (NARS) on 22

April 1977 determined that unevaluated intelligence reports disseminated by the Operations Directorate to the Intelligence Community are permanent

records. The rationale is that these reports constitute a record of the / dissemination of foreign intelligence collected by the

ILLEGIB A Agency, [REDACTED] *Furthermore,* plus the fact that large numbers of these reports *have already been* ~~were~~ accessioned to NARS as permanent records by other U.S. Government agencies.

b. All permanent records are subject to systematic review for declassification as required in E.O. 11652 and E.O. 12065. Documents, 30 or 20 years of age respectively, must either be declassified or the agency head must certify that continued classification is required for national security reasons.

c. The classification review of unevaluated intelligence reports produced by ~~CIC and CIA/OSO~~ ⁱⁿ for the period 1946-50 has raised serious questions regarding the declassification and release of ~~any~~ unevaluated reports. Although the substance of individual reports often does not merit continued classification, items in the report format, such as "Place Acquired", ^{and of liaison relationships,} provide evidence of CIA operations ~~in a given~~ ^{where} country, ~~if the report is declassified and released to the public. Also,~~ "Source" descriptions, even though general, pinpoint sectors within a country ^{from} in which agents ~~are~~ ^{were} reporting to CIA. Such revelations of CIA operations, ^{even though 30 years old,} ~~as in the exposure~~ ^{and tend to reveal liaison relationships.}  in the U.S., would not be viewed kindly by the country concerned. A further risk is posed by the declassification and release of a ^{group} ~~number~~ of reports, on a specific country or ^{topic,} ~~subject~~, which individually would do no harm but in the aggregate reveal CIA interests and scope of operations during a given time frame.

STATINTL

d. The problem of protecting CIA equities while carrying out the intent of the E.O.s to declassify as much information as possible was raised with Mr. Edwin Alan Thompson, Chief, Records Declassification Division (NARS), recognizing that the substantive content of the many unevaluated reports does not justify continued classification. The suggestion was made that CIA might declassify unevaluated reports whose substance does not merit continued classification with the understanding that NARS withhold them from public release, under the provision of (3-501) of E.O. 12065 which permits withholding if "warranted under applicable ^{In this case, the CIA Acts of 1947 and 1949.} law." ^A If these reports should later be requested under the FOIA or E.O. 12065, they could be referred to CIA for sanitizing of format and release of non-sensitive information. Mr. Thompson discussed the suggestion

with the Deputy Archivist, Dr. James E. O'Neill. Both recognized CIA's legitimate concern, but noted that NARS is not equipped to withhold from public release large numbers of declassified reports with restrictive caveats. In their view retention of ^{the} classification ^{on} ~~of~~ unevaluated intelligence is the only feasible solution to protect CIA equities.

e. It is concluded that CIA can and should continue to retain classification on all unevaluated intelligence reports for the reasons stated and in the light of the position taken by the National Archives and Records Service.

3. Staff Position: OGC

DDO/IMS fully concurs in the position taken above.

4. Recommendation: That you approve as Agency declassification policy, the concept that unevaluated intelligence reports must continue to be classified regardless of the substantive nature of the information reported, and that you sign the attached letter on this policy to Dr. Rhoads, Archivist of the United States.

John F. Blake

Attachment. a/s

APPROVED: _____
Director of Central Intelligence

DISAPPROVED: _____
Director of Central Intelligence

Date: _____

Dr. James B. Rhoads
Archivist of the United States
National Archives and Records Service
Eighth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Room 111
Washington, D.C. 20408

Dear Dr. Rhoads:

I am informed that our respective staffs concerned with the systematic review of permanent records for declassification under E.O. 11652 and E.O. 12065 mutually recognize that the declassification and release to the public of unevaluated intelligence reports would pose serious security problems. Although the substance of individual reports often does not merit continued classification, items in the report format, such as "Place Acquired", provide evidence of CIA operations in a given country if the report is declassified and released to the public. Source descriptions, even though general, pinpoint sectors within a country in which agents are reporting to CIA. Such official revelations of CIA operations are likely to be viewed with some jaundice, at least by the country concerned, with attendant risk to ^{present} ~~ongoing~~ operations. A further risk is posed by the declassification and release of a number of reports, on a specific country or subject, which individually might do no harm but in the aggregate reveal CIA interests and scope of operations during a given time frame.

In consideration of these risks and in accord with the oral understanding reached by our respective staffs, I concur that unevaluated intelligence reports require continued retention of classification to protect intelligence sources and methods and prevent any adverse impact that declassification and release of these reports could have on the foreign relations of the U.S.

STATINTL

You are hereby authorized to retain classification on all those
unevaluated *and field intelligence* reports that have been accessioned as
permanent records to NARS by other agencies. If these reports should
become the subject of requests under the FOIA or the mandatory review
provisions of E.O. 12065, they should be referred to this Agency for
sanitizing of format and release of non-sensitive information.

My staff concerned with classification review stands ready to
assist in any problems of procedure that may arise.

Sincerely,

STANSFIELD TURNER

OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP

TO	NAME AND ADDRESS	DATE	INITIALS
1	C/IMS 1 D 4124 Hqs	1 AUG 1978	10
2	<i>Well, I agree with the thrust. I</i>		
3	<i>suggest the phrase "liaison relationship" get</i>		
4	<i>in the memo. Liaison counts!! My</i>		
5	<i>written notes are just that. They aren't binding.</i>		
6	<i>We want copy of final memo + letter. 10</i>		
ACTION		DIRECT REPLY	PREPARE REPLY
APPROVAL		DISPATCH	RECOMMENDATION
COMMENT		FILE	RETURN
CONCURRENCE		INFORMATION	SIGNATURE

Remarks:

Bill:

A decision was finally reached over here to make a formal request of the DCI for approval of action as recommended in the attached draft memo.

Your review of these papers and the draft letter to the Chief Archivist will be very much appreciated as will be any comments and/or suggestions.

Bill M.

An early reply will be appreciated. Thanks so much.

Hand Carried to [redacted] 8/11/78

FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER

FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.		DATE
[redacted] RRB/ ISAS [redacted] Hqs		8/7/78
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	UNCLASSIFIED	CONFIDENTIAL SECRET